

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus for heat sealing a pack comprising a first pack member including a plurality of formations, each providing an open-topped receptacle, and a second
5 pack member for sealing to the first pack member to close and seal the receptacles, the apparatus including a base and a lid for sandwiching the first and second pack members therebetween and heating means adapted to heat only selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members to seal the first and second pack members together, thereby closing and sealing the receptacles.
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2. Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein when the first and second pack members are sandwiched together between the base and the lid of the apparatus, the respective pack members include areas of contact therebetween which encircle the receptacles.
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3. Apparatus according to claim 2 wherein the heating means is adapted to apply heat only to the contact areas which substantially encircle the receptacles.
4. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the base of the
20 apparatus is adapted to receive a first pack member comprising a sheet of material with formations provided therein, the sheet of material including a substantially planar part with formations depending therefrom, and the first pack member having a flat upper face including holes defining the tops of the receptacles.
- 25 5. Apparatus according to claim 4 wherein the base includes a support member for receiving the first pack member, the support member including a substantially planar part for supporting the substantially planar part of the first pack member and a plurality of holes or pockets in the planar part for receiving the formations of the first pack member.
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6. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the lid of the apparatus includes a substantially planar contact face for contacting a substantially planar second pack member when the first and second pack members are sandwiched between the lid and the base of the apparatus.

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7. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the lid of the apparatus is movably attached to the base such that it may be moved between an open and a closed position and in the open position, the lid is spaced from the base such that the first pack member may be placed onto the base.

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8. Apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the closed position the lid and the base may sandwich first and second pack members therebetween, the second pack member contacting the upper face of the first pack member, thus defining the contact area between the first and second pack members.

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9. Apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the overall contact area comprises the whole of the shape of the flat upper face of the first pack member, the overall contact area thereby including holes representing the regions of the receptacles.

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10. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the lid is hinged to the base.

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11. Apparatus according to claim 10 wherein the apparatus includes catch means for holding the lid and the base firmly together in the closed position to sandwich the first and second pack members firmly therebetween.

12. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the lid includes heating means for heating the selected contact areas between the first and second pack members.

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13. Apparatus according to claim 12 wherein the heating means includes a heating element through which a current may flow.

14. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the base includes heating means for heating the selected contact areas of the first and second pack

5 members.

15. Apparatus according to claim 14 wherein the heating means substantially encircles the receptacles to apply heat to selected contact areas which substantially encircle the receptacles.

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16. Apparatus according to any of claims 12 to 15 wherein the heating means is adapted to heat the selected contact areas to a temperature of at least 100°C but is adapted to provide substantially no heating of air in the receptacles.

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17. Apparatus according to any of claims 12 to 16 wherein the apparatus includes a switch for closing to cause current to flow through the heating means, the switch closing automatically when the lid is brought into its closed position.

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18. Apparatus according to any of claims 12 to 17 wherein the apparatus includes a controller for controlling the flow of current in dependence on a temperature feedback signal.

19. Apparatus for forming a sealed monitored dosage pack, the apparatus being according to any preceding claim.

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20. Apparatus according to claim 19 wherein the apparatus further includes a pack comprising a first pack member including a plurality of formations, each providing an open-topped receptacle, and a second pack member for sealing to the first pack member to close and seal the receptacles.

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21. A method of heat sealing a pack comprising a first pack member including a plurality of formations, each providing an open-topped receptacle, and a second pack member for sealing to the first pack member to close and seal the receptacles, the method including the steps of:
- 5 providing an apparatus including a base and a lid for sandwiching the first and second pack members therebetween and heating means provided in the base and/or the lid;
- placing the first and second pack members in the apparatus and manipulating the base and/or the lid to sandwich the first and second pack members between the
10 base and the lid; and
- using the heating means to heat only selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members to seal the first and second pack members together, thereby closing and sealing the receptacles.
- 15 22. A method according to claim 21 wherein the heat is applied only to selected contact areas between the receptacles.
23. A method according to claim 22 wherein the selected areas substantially encircle the receptacles such that heat is not applied directly to the receptacles.
- 20 24. A method according to claim 23 wherein the heat is applied for between 1 and 10 seconds.
25. A method according to any of claims 21 to 24 wherein the method includes
25 the step of controlling the application of heat in dependence upon a temperature feedback signal.
26. A method according to any of claims 21 to 25 wherein the method is for forming a sealed monitored dosage pack and includes the step of placing a substance in each of the receptacles before positioning the second pack member
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over the first pack member and manipulating the base and lid to sandwich the pack members therebetween.

27. A method according to claim 25 wherein the substance is a medication.

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28. Apparatus substantially as herein described with reference to the drawings.

29. A method substantially as herein described with reference to the drawings.

10 30. Any novel subject matter or combination including novel subject matter disclosed herein, whether or not within the scope of or relating to the same invention as any of the preceding claims.